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SPA-362
26 January 2022

Spring Project Action Plan with Update Work

PROJECT TITLE: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Environment: Identifying Corporate Best Practices for Net Positive Environmental Contributions.

NOTE: This title importantly and concisely summarizes the fundamental nature of my spring project, identifying the relevant information and themes to be communicated through the final product: an open letter on the subject of how corporations can use their capital for good in the environment.

RESEARCH QUESTION: As corporations across the globe expand rapidly to meet the demands of a growing world marketplace, how can United States based enterprises use their social, political, and economic capital to enact positive environmental practices in America?

NOTE: The aforementioned research question remains pertinent and important. Throughout the course of last semester, I was able to reform the question to develop a relevant and clear research question. The above question is comprehensive and encompasses a great deal of information regarding the nature of my project, the scope of my research, the targeted audience, and some of the key stakeholders.

INCENTIVE: According to the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, 100 corporations have contributed to more than 70% of complete global greenhouse gas emission over the last 40 years. Furthermore, approximately 6% of American corporations account for more than 50% of total profits; a striking statistic considering the sheer volume of business enterprises in the United States. Concurrent with these indisputable facts, the world faces unprecedented challenges related to climate change and global warming. Indeed, the United Nations finds that corporate powerhouse cities such as New York and Shanghai may find themselves underwater in the near future if no changes are made. Climate change costs the global economy more than 550 billion dollars annually. There is no doubt that the growing environmental crisis impacts not only private citizens, but corporate entities as well.

LITERATURE REVIEW: Climate change is undoubtedly one of the greatest social, economic, and physical crises facing the global world today. This literature review will examine the relationship between corporate entities and this massive issue. Moreover, the scholarship included will show the significance of corporate social responsibility and how this relates to environmental action. The careful analysis of research based scholarship, peer reviewed journal articles, and opinion-based news pieces is able to provide a better understanding of the intricacies of the topic. The establishment of the academic arguments surrounding this ethical dilemma provides a consequential launching point for a well informed discussion on the merits of the topic, as well as a basis for investigation through case studies of American corporations.

Before understanding the responsibilities of corporate entities in promoting positive climate action, it is imperative to understand the principles of corporate social responsibility. The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility contends that there is no settled, singular definition for corporate social responsibility, rather figures like Milton Friedman posit that “the social responsibility of the firm is to increase its profits’, [while] Keith Davis argues that CSR requires ‘consideration of issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm.’” (Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility, 3). Additionally, theorists offer that corporate social responsibility is an

“‘obligation to respond to the externalities created by market action’ or ‘discretionary spending in furtherance of an explicit measurable social objective consistent with relevant social norms and laws.’” (Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility, 4). It is clear that there are vastly different definitions for the theory, and scholarship does not retain just one. For the purposes of this academic review of literature, the most applicable definition of corporate social responsibility is a hybrid of the last two goals aforementioned in this paragraph. Karwowski and Raulinajtys-Grzybek, in their examination of corporate social responsibility and environmental risk mitigation, settle on the 2001 European Commission definition of this concept, “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with their stakeholders.” The Polish scholars suggest that this establishes a “triple bottom line” and that “involvement in CSR activities by [a] firm is one of the ways through which a firm builds its reputation and engagement in CSR activities is important for improving the image and reputation of a firm among its stakeholders.” (Karwowski, 1273). It is clear that corporate social responsibility serves as a cornerstone of enterprise operations in the twenty-first century and that the benefits strongly outweigh the detrimental effects of increased investment in marginal programs that, in the long run, drive sales and improve social standing.

Xu et al. corroborate this theoretical notion with empirical evidence ascertained through the careful examination of 141 publicly-traded construction firms. They noted that “[corporate environmental responsibility] increased the firms’ Return of Equity (ROE) and Economic Added Value (EVA) margin by 2.62% and 0.10%, respectively.” (Xu et al., 10). While these increases may not seem significant, Xu notes that “the findings revealed decisive implications for [the] organizations to implement [corporate environmental responsibility] while maintaining the competitiveness of corporate profitability.” (Xu et al., 10). Epstein furthers this idea, albeit conceptually, by suggesting that “corporations should consider sustainability performance as a variable in the evaluation of total corporate performance and provide incentives for employees to suggest social and environmental improvements. These suggestions will ultimately lead to corporate profit improvements.” (Epstein, XX). Indubitably, this high level of scholarship acknowledges the narrowly intertwined nature of corporate social responsibility and profitability. Epstein argues, further, that corporations should secure these tenets at the core of their corporate strategy; “to integrate sustainability into day-to-day decision-making, companies need to make sustainability a central tenet of their strategy and exercise leadership to reinforce these objectives throughout the organization.” (Epstein, XX). This sentiment is consistent with the voices of nearly every other author included in this academic review of literature.

The question remains though, why is the environment the social concern at the forefront of the discussion surrounding corporate social responsibility? Scholars offer two compelling arguments pertaining to this question; similar in their scope but converse in their implications. Xu and fellow researchers provide, empirically, that “construction is responsible for 50% of carbon emissions, 40% of energy consumption, and half of the landfill waste globally.” (Xu et. al, 1). This opinion is rooted, clearly, in the impact that corporate entities, in this case specifically the construction industry, has on climate change. Conversely, Monika Winn and her team of Business Strategy researchers approach the question examining the role of climate change on enterprises. Winn concludes that “climate change presents a new, unprecedentedly disruptive, potentially cascading and profoundly uncertain type of change in organizational environments, and that business organizations are currently ill prepared to respond or adapt to such [massive discontinuous change].” (Winn et al., 169). Upon this conclusion, Winn furthers that there is an “urgent need to assess the implications of MDC and its anthropogenic sources, not only for management research, but also for management education in order to provide decision makers with the concepts and tools that not only aid the development of better organizational preparedness for ‘surprise’, but even more urgently assist in finding effective, cross-sectoral initiatives, policies and actions to depart from business as usual and radically reduce ecologically and socially damaging practices.” (Winn et al., 169). Although Xu approaches the question differently, he and his team reach a similar conclusion suggesting that “to confront those environmental issues, stipulating appropriate strategies to drive construction firms towards corporate environmentally responsible activities is essential” (Xu et al., 1).

Despite dissimilar starting points, it is clear that the outcome and, thus, solutions are found on equal footing and in the same categorical basis.

Although the picture painted by many of the aforementioned scholars is rather grim, there remains some hope as provided by the scholarship produced by Gouldson and Rondinelli. In a study of supermarkets, Gouldson concludes that “there is certainly a basis for this optimism given that, at least in relation to their own operations, supermarkets have consistently achieved improvements in their energy efficiency and emissions intensity and, to some extent, achieved reductions in their greenhouse gas emissions.” (Gouldson, 9). Notably, this implies that there is room for corporations to improve if they take their role of corporate sustainability seriously and express a willingness to change. Moreover, Rondinelli provides that there is a basis for comprehensive and productive partnership between corporations and environmental groups offering that “corporate-[non-profit organization] collaborations can contribute to environmental protection, enhance corporate performance, confer external legitimacy on internal environmental management practices, and transfer knowledge among specialized organizations” (Rondinelli, 74). It is clear that there are significant benefits to corporate-nonprofit partnerships particularly in ameliorating such environmental issues. The hope that these authors provide offers a beacon of light through the, somewhat literally, smoke.

Conclusively, the expansive scholarship on this topic provides an excellent basis for a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies related to corporate social responsibility, corporate entities, and climate change. This high caliber of research makes possible a vast examination of cases in which enterprises have used their capital for both positive and negative change.

NOTE: As a large component of the spring action project as described later in this document is research based and oriented, the aforementioned scholarship provides an excellent foundation for further research and development when analyzing the research question. The annotated bibliography for the literature review is included directly following this note and prior to the section entitled “Policy Memo” for reference as necessary.

Epstein, Marc J. “Leadership and Strategy for Corporate Sustainability.” *Making Sustainability Work*, 2018, pp. 58–84., doi:10.4324/9781351280129-3.

Marc Epstein examines the ways in which corporations can formulate comprehensive environmental strategies that promote environmental sustainability and protection. Notably, this work manifests in a review of best practices and processes through which corporations should act when formulating decisions. Epstein most recently served as Distinguished Research Professor at Rice University School of Business and has previously held positions at both Stanford and Harvard Business Schools. He is widely regarded as one of the foremost scholars in corporate sustainability. This source seems relatively free of bias as it is a discussion of best practices extensively researched. Epstein’s work will be an essential reference for reviewing the choices of American corporations.

Gouldson, Andy, and Rory Sullivan. “Long-Term Corporate Climate Change Targets: What Could They Deliver?” *Environmental Science & Policy*, vol. 27, 2013, pp. 1–10., doi:10.1016/j.envsci.2012.11.013.

This work examines the intersectionality between voluntary climate related commitments published by corporations and the impact of these goals on society-wide sustainability work. North Gouldson and Sullivan serve as professors in the School of Earth and Environment at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom. Importantly, this work exhibits some bias as it is written from an English perspective rather than an American one. Despite this, it will serve as a cornerstone for research regarding the role of corporate climate action and its place within the broader context of sustainability efforts.

Karwowski, Mariusz, and Monika Raulinajtys-Grzybek. "The Application of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Actions for Mitigation of Environmental, Social, Corporate Governance (ESG) and Reputational Risk in Integrated Reports." *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, vol. 28, no. 4, 2021, pp. 1270–1284., doi:10.1002/csr.2137.

Grounded in statistical data, this peer-reviewed article examines the role of corporate social responsibility in risk mitigation and reduction. The piece concludes that companies identify their risks and use their social responsibility to mitigate such issues. Karwowski and Raulinajtys-Grzybek are both faculty members at the Warsaw School of Economics and have written extensively about the role of corporate social responsibility and environmental risk mitigation. Other than not being American-based, this article does not possess any relevant biases and represents an advanced level of scholarship, crucial to a comprehensive review of the intrinsic relationship between corporate responsibility and both social and climate action.

Rondinelli, Dennis A., and Ted London. "How Corporations and Environmental Groups Cooperate: Assessing Cross-Sector Alliances and Collaborations." *Academy of Management Perspectives*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2003, pp. 61–76., doi:10.5465/ame.2003.9474812.

This work examines the delicate and powerful relationship between corporate entities and environmental action groups. Importantly, this scholarship addresses specific case studies that will be relevant to the research question at hand. Dennis Rondinelli served as a professor at both the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University while Ted London serves as the Ford Motor Company Clinical Professor of Business at the University of Michigan. This piece represents the high caliber of scholarship necessary to conduct an in-depth review and case study of corporate environmental action. Notably, this piece was published in 2003 and may contain information that has since been contradicted. Despite this, it will serve a useful purpose in the final research product.

"The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility." *Oxford Handbooks Online*, 2009, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199211593.001.0001.

This handbook is useful in defining corporate social responsibility. It is published by Oxford Handbooks Online, a well regarded and respected source. There is not a great deal of bias and the source will be used primarily for background information related to the topic. There is a great deal of information regarding this topic and others related to the research question.

Winn, Monika, et al. "Impacts from Climate Change on Organizations: a Conceptual Foundation." *Business Strategy and the Environment*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2011, pp. 157–173., doi:10.1002/bse.679.

Authored by several of the world's leading researchers in climate change and organizational behavior, this source presents an alternative perspective that is fundamental to understanding the depth of the research question at hand. Unlike much of the other scholarship in this annotated bibliography, this piece focuses less on the role of organizations in climate change but the role of climate change on organizations. Being written from this perspective, it could be argued that there is some bias related to the sourcing of blame for the climate crisis in which we find ourselves at present. Regardless, this perspective is fundamental in understanding why corporations choose to expend a great deal of capital in order to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Xu, Qian, et al. "Does Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER) Affect Corporate Financial Performance? Evidence from the Global Public Construction Firms." *Journal of Cleaner Production*, vol. 315, 2021, p. 128131., doi:10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.128131.

This scholarship addresses the relationship between environmental responsibility and financial performance. In addition, it is managed through a comprehensive case study of global public construction firms. While there is some bias being that the research is limited exclusively to construction firms, the examples learned from the case studies provides a great deal of insight that can be extrapolated to other industries as well.

POLICY MEMO: Below is the policy memo related directly to my research question mentioned above. Pieces of the complete policy memo have been removed where they repeat other sections in the complete nature of this document. Removed sections include: Research Question, Incentive.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: After reviewing scholarship surrounding corporate social responsibility and the role of corporations in environmental crises, the following points summarize some key facets taken from a broad range of academic sources.

1. "climate change presents a new, unprecedentedly disruptive, potentially cascading and profoundly uncertain type of change in organizational environments, and that business organizations are currently ill prepared to respond or adapt to such [massive discontinuous change]." (Winn et al., 169).
2. Corporate Social Responsibility is an "obligation to respond to the externalities created by market action" or "discretionary spending in furtherance of an explicit measurable social objective consistent with relevant social norms and laws." (Oxford Handbook of CSR).
3. "[corporate environmental responsibility] increased firms' Return of Equity (ROE) and Economic Added Value (EVA) margin by 2.62% and 0.10%, respectively." (Xu et al., 10).
4. "To integrate sustainability into day-to-day decision-making, companies need to make sustainability a central tenet of their strategy and exercise leadership to reinforce these objectives throughout the organization." (Epstein, XX).
5. "corporations should consider sustainability performance as a variable in the evaluation of total corporate performance and provide incentives for employees to suggest social and environmental improvements. These suggestions will ultimately lead to corporate profit improvements." (Epstein, XX).
6. "corporate-[non-profit organization] collaborations can contribute to environmental protection, enhance corporate performance, confer external legitimacy on internal environmental management practices, and transfer knowledge among specialized organizations" (Rondinelli).

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: There are many parties that are directly engaged and impacted by the issues aforementioned including corporations, non-profit organizations, various constituencies, consumers, scholars, and more. Several of these stakeholders are included in the subsequent points.

1. John D. Sterman, Jay W. Forrester Professor of Management at the MIT Sloan School of Management. Professor Sterman is a leading scholar able to speak directly to the relationship between corporations and environmental sustainability efforts.
 - a. Professor Sterman exemplifies the scholarship camp of stakeholders. Indeed, experts in the field of corporate social responsibility and sustainability are key to this project and research as they fully know and understand the implications, needs, opinions, opportunities and vast scope of problems related to this field.
2. Mary A. Wroten, Director of Global Sustainability at the Ford Motor Company. Ms. Wroten has experienced firsthand the directing of corporations, admittedly one that has had a significant

impact on the climate, towards a more positive and sustainable role within the context of corporate citizenship and sustainability efforts.

- a. Ms. Wroten serves as an example for the practitioners enacting corporate social responsibility at a corporate level with the goal of enacting positive change and action from a corporate level. Importantly, these stakeholders will be able to provide interesting insight into the considerations of corporate entities when enacting policy and non-policy based changes to operations and management.
3. Senator Tom Carper, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. Senator Carper leads a committee of Senators who have the ability to review legislation prior to consideration on the floor of the Senate and thus is able to speak to the ability of Congress to develop legislation related to corporations and the environment.
 - a. Senator Carper serves as a governmental stakeholder responsible for the formation of laws and legislative regulations related to the field. Importantly, the voices of all of the other stakeholders in this section ought to weigh equally on the government stakeholders in order to develop comprehensive legislation related to the field.
4. Greenpeace, Environmental Advocacy Non-Governmental Organization. Greenpeace is one of the foremost and significant players in the global fight for climate justice. They offer a unique perspective on the climate crisis and environmental sustainability initiatives.
 - a. Non Governmental Organizations such as Greenpeace often have interests related to the fields in which the government is targeting legislation. In terms of the environment, there are a variety of groups that offer significant views and contributions to the conversation surrounding the issue. These are integral to the adoption and adaptation of policy.

APPRAISAL OF PAST VIEWS: Very few people would argue that we should take no action related to the climate, however there are myriad opinions on how this action should be approached. Some believe that citizens should lead the action, others that there should be action primarily by corporations, and others believe that there should be a “meeting of the minds” so to speak, between corporations and citizens. Ultimately there is a need for cooperation between all parties in order to promote positive action related to sustainability initiatives. It is likely that members of each group may differ in their approach to the problem and it will absolutely be difficult, however it is probable that the benefits of positive action will greatly outweigh the negatives.

CONCLUSION: Historically, efforts to move corporations have been extremely slow moving and complex, oftentimes done simply for show or for the appearance of “goodwill” or to appeal to their various constituencies. This type of climate action is, of course, better than nothing at all, but the time has come for significant and radical change within the system. Backed by subjective and empirical scholarship, it is obviously time for corporations, specifically those with vast amounts of social and economic capital, to place sustainability initiatives at the forefront of their missions. After all, there will come a time, if no action is taken, that there will be no market in which to sell goods and further profit. Moving corporations towards more sustainable entities will require a whole-of-country approach capitalizing on government action, non-governmental organizations and their wealth of knowledge, corporate capital, and the willingness of citizens to support such a movement.

PROJECT PLAN: In order to bring awareness to the issue and to incentivize positive action related to the climate crisis, this project will be done in the form of a written letter campaign. The letter is to include several sections and components including background information, scholarship and empirical research, comprehensive policy best practices, companion corporate best practices, and a cohesive statement of value. Upon completion, the letter will be published and sent to several key stakeholders including corporations and legislators. The project is to be completed in four phases, no later than April 15, 2022. After this date, the project will be considered late.

TIMELINE: A comprehensive project timeline including each action and steps for the spring semester project is included below.

1. JANUARY (Background Phase I)

a. The first phase of the project is to begin the comprehensive research for the letter. The components of this phase will establish the fundamental basis of the project. Subsequent to Background Phase I, it will become possible to proceed or alter the direction of the project considerably if necessary. The following key components are to be completed during Background Phase I.

i. Identify Specific Stakeholders (Weeks 1, 2)

1. The purpose of identifying specific stakeholders is to establish a list of scholars and practitioners to interview in order to establish a first hand perspective as to what policies and best practices work for corporations in their efforts to combat climate change and the climate crisis that faces the world and, specifically, the impact the crisis has on the global economy.

ii. Begin Comprehensive Best-Practice Research (Weeks 3, 4)

1. The research portion is imperative in the construction of a letter in order to create a compelling and comprehensive piece that is clear, concise, relevant, and impactful to the reader.

2. FEBRUARY (Background Phase II)

a. The second phase of the project, Background Phase II, is the second and final research phase of the project. During this phase, the research will be concluded and formulated either in paragraph or bullet point form including a full review of interviews and research as well as citations relevant to the project.

i. Finalize Research (Weeks 1,2)

1. Complete research and write summary with references and best practices, no greater than 1 page, single spaced.

ii. Interview Stakeholders (Weeks 3, 4)

1. Interview stakeholders and synthesize key points and relevant takeaways into a comprehensive, researched based narrative. Highlight the best practices and identify overlap between stakeholders and research. NOTE: the interview component of this project may be substituted for additional research given the lack of success with interviews experiences in Fall 2021 and expanded upon in the subsequent Interview Update section.

3. MARCH (Drafting Phase)

a. The third phase, Drafting, is the time in which the project begins to take meaningful and comprehensive form. Importantly, this is when all the many aspects of the background research come concretely. Finally, this phase concludes with the final letter.

i. Begin Drafting Letter (Weeks 1, 2, 3)

1. Combine the research and interviews into a detailed letter addressing stakeholders, including corporations and government officials, that lays out policy and management best practices related to the environment and corporate social responsibility

ii. Finalize Letter (Week 4)

1. Finalize letter into publishing state. Include any relevant information, salutations, and conclusions. The final letter should not exceed 6 single spaced pages including the letterhead and name line.

4. APRIL (Publishing Phase)

a. The fourth and final phase of the project is the Publishing process. During this time, the letter will be printed and distributed and the project will be completed. Further, the list of

recipients will be published along with the letter in order to raise awareness to who the recipients of the letter are and to establish their position as a stakeholder.

- i. Establish Distribution List (Week 1)
 1. Establish a concrete list of stakeholders whom the letter will be distributed to via the United States Postal Service. The list should include name, title, organization, and address.
- ii. Print, Publish, and Distribute (Week 2)
 1. The final letter should be printed, published as an open letter, and be distributed to the stakeholders established in the stakeholder list.

BUDGET: There are several costs associated with a proposed project to highlight the best practices of sustainability efforts and disseminate the information. These costs are highlighted below.

1. The cost of publishing and printing an informational pamphlet and accompanying letter containing information of best practices.
2. The cost of mailing these informational documents to members of various stakeholder groups including the government, corporations, and non-governmental organizations.

CONCLUSION: Historically, efforts to move corporations have been extremely slow moving and complex, oftentimes done simply for show or for the appearance of “goodwill” or to appeal to their various constituencies. This type of climate action is, of course, better than nothing at all, but the time has come for significant and radical change within the system. Backed by subjective and empirical scholarship, it is obviously time for corporations, specifically those with vast amounts of social and economic capital, to place sustainability initiatives at the forefront of their missions. After all, there will come a time, if no action is taken, that there will be no market in which to sell goods and further profit. Moving corporations towards more sustainable entities will require a whole-of-country approach capitalizing on government action, non-governmental organizations and their wealth of knowledge, corporate capital, and the willingness of citizens to support such a movement. The purpose of this project is to bring awareness to these issues and to, in a comprehensive manner, provide policy recommendations related to the issue as well as establish cohesive best practices for corporate stakeholders and practitioners in the industry. While the project may not yet have tangible impacts, as a fundraiser would in the form of a contribution where the impact is lost and unclear, it provides real and possible solutions to pressing issues that are affecting the country. In the future, it is the hope that this project may incentivize and serve as a motivation to enact real change.

INTERVIEW UPDATE: Unfortunately, given repeated attempts at contact with nearly ten scholars and practitioners in the field, including American University Professors, I was unable to complete an interview during the Fall 2021 semester. This was particularly discouraging to me given the nature of my project and the strong intention that I had on interviewing scholars and practitioners for the spring portion of my project. For the implementation portion of my project, I intend on submitting several interview requests despite my lack of success last semester. Should these interviews be granted, they would provide a great deal of additional value to my project, but if they are not possible, I intend on supplementing my project with additional research. I have included below the questions I had intended to ask the initial list of stakeholders or representatives of their offices. As I reached out to scholars and practitioners in the four main sectors (academic, political, non-profit, and corporate), I intended on using the questions within the categories for the initial individual.

GENERAL QUESTIONS: These questions are more general to the field and can be equally applied to all scholars and practitioners.

1. What does corporate social responsibility mean to you? What does it look like?
2. Are there firms that are leading in their sectors specifically in sustainable initiatives?
3. How can firms use their social, political, and physical capital for good in 2021?

4. What systematic failures exist that have led to institutional failures related to climate change and environmental responsibility?
5. If you could introduce any piece of legislation related to corporate sustainability initiatives, what would you want it to look like?
6. How can consumers make better informed choices about their goods and services to reflect a greater propensity towards environmentally conscious firms?
7. What best practices have you seen in your industry? What are ways in which corporations can make sustainability a core part of their mission and operations?
8. What impacts have you seen from the climate crisis on your industry? How can these impacts be addressed best?
9. What are the largest flaws that you would like to see ameliorated related to corporations?
10. On the whole, do you believe that corporations net positive or negative impacts on society generally.

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS: These questions are categorized based on the scholar or practitioner for which they are intended. There may be overlap between some, but generally they are intended solely for the individual within whose category they fall.

1. John D. Sterman, Jay W. Forrester Professor of Management at the MIT Sloan School of Management.
 - a. Generally, how can organizations work towards sustainable initiatives in their core mission and daily operations?
 - b. Specifically, in what cases do these organizations succeed in their mission?
 - c. How do sustainability initiatives positively or negatively impact the consumer base of a corporation as well as their profitability?
 - d. Are there certain corporations that you have observed that have done well for the environment and experienced positive economic impacts? Are there corporations that have failed?
 - e. What separates successful and unsuccessful businesses when it comes to an investment in environmental issues?
 - f. What is the most important thing a corporation can do in order to foster an environmentally sustainable and conscious community?
2. Mary A. Wroten, Director of Global Sustainability at the Ford Motor Company.
 - a. How has Ford Motor Company responded to the worsening environmental situation in which we find ourselves at present?
 - b. Are there certain programs that Ford has rolled out specifically related to environmental sustainability and corporate responsibility?
 - c. Does Ford feel compelled to work for environmental protection given that corporations, and specifically the auto industry, have contributed greatly to climate change?
 - d. How can Ford position themselves as a leader in sustainability? Are there ways in which they are attempting to move towards the front of the pack in terms of curing edge technologies and initiatives?
 - e. What, if any, best practices has Ford Motor Company implemented in order to work towards a net positive impact on the environment?
3. Senator Tom Carper, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.
 - a. What legislative measures are currently in place related to corporations and environmental responsibility?
 - b. What legislative measures are currently up for consideration on the floor of the Senate related to corporations and the climate crisis?
 - c. What is the most important piece of legislation to come forth related to corporations and the climate in the last 50 years?

- d. What ways can Congress provide consumers with the tools necessary to make positive choices regarding their consumption?
 - e. Which Members of Congress, Organizations, and Corporations are most involved in the fight against climate change?
4. Greenpeace, Environmental Advocacy Non-Governmental Organization.
- a. Which Members of Congress, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Corporations are most involved in the fight against climate change?
 - b. Are there any best practices that your group has been advocating for related to environmental sustainability initiatives?
 - c. How can the average American help?
 - d. How does Greenpeace use their platform to advocate for positive action related to climate change and environmental sustainability?
 - e. Are there any groups that you believe should make more of an effort to make sustainability a core part of their social and physical mission?
 - f. What is the best way that corporations can move towards sustainability?

DECISION MATRIX: Included below is the decision matrix, project proposals, and final decision based criteria for the Spring Action project. Further, as expanded by the nature of the project update, the decision matrix includes an additional category (interest) in the below version.

PROJECT PROPOSALS: There are several potential projects related directly and tangentially to the research question. Importantly, these projects vary wildly in scope, impact, and difficulty. Overall, the ideas subsequently mentioned aim to achieve very different ends.

1. Corporate Best Practices Letter
 - a. The corporate policy best practices letter will take the information gained from research as well as interviews with scholars and practitioners, and create a meaningful list of best practices for corporations, policy recommendations for government groups, and guidance for stakeholder nonprofits. The letter, when completed, will be mailed to relevant congressional offices, nonprofit organizations, and relevant corporations as well as published as an open letter on the internet. The purpose of the letter and research is to establish clear parameters and guidelines to enact meaningful change related to corporate entities and environmental protection and sustainability initiatives. This project is labor intensive, but is feasible and as a result of the high level of labor has the greatest scope of reach and subsequently the greatest impact.
2. Fundraiser for Environmental Cause
 - a. A low intensity and low reward project, a fundraiser would consist of raising funding for an environmental protection organization. This would likely be conducted through a social media campaign where brief information related to the environmental cause is published, followed by a request for donations. This project lacks any sort of true impact and would likely result in a low value contribution to a non-profit where the effects of the contribution are unspecified.
3. Legislative Bill Research
 - a. The legislative bill research project would utilize several databases to research relevant legislative initiatives and determine their benefits and drawbacks. The project would culminate in a comprehensive review of relevant legislative initiatives that would be published and distributed to government offices in order to bring awareness to the policy initiatives. This is relatively intensive in that a great deal of the project will be narrow policy analysis. The reward is slightly lower than the corporate best letter as it will have only a government based impact and scope. Aspects of this project are able to be combined with the letter project in order to make policy recommendations and bring policy awareness.

4. Interview Based Short Documentary

- a. An interview based short documentary would have the ability to condense the direct words of scholars and practitioners into the context of an informative documentary. This project would be extremely time consuming and have low scope as there is no easy way to distribute a video publication. Indeed, the project is also extremely expensive and not a great option for a semester-long action project. In another context, however, this project could be greatly beneficial and interesting as it would combine footage, interview contents, and information into a cohesive and impactful documentary.

DECISION MATRIX: NOTE: the ranking system in the subsequent decision matrix is such that the highest number represents the greatest appeal and thus the project with the highest total score in the TOTAL column ought to be the choice based on the matrix

	Time Required	Feasibility	Associated Costs	Interest	Scope of Reach	TOTAL
Corporate Best Practices Letter	3	3	2	4	4	16
Fundraiser For Environment	4	4	3	2	2	15
Legislative Bill Research	2	2	4	3	1	12
Interview Based Documentary	1	1	1	1	3	7

MATRIX RESULTS AND DECISION: Overall, the matrix leaves the results of the fundraising campaign and letter as the greatest options for a project. Despite the identical score, I will choose to conduct the research letter as my spring action project. This has the greatest scope and, while it may be labor intensive, it yields much greater rewards. The letter will include aspects of the policy research proposal as well, culminating in a section specifically about introduced policies that members may wish to cosponsor and organizations to support and endorse. I am excited for the significantly positive impacts associated with the completion of this project.